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HOW TO INTRODUCE SUPERVISED STUDY

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It is quite general to find that those who are interested in the proposal of a new administrative or instructional procedure attempt to introduce the new method in their schools without studying the local conditions and the consequent needful adjustments or modifications that must be made if the new method is to have a fair opportunity to succeed as well as in other surroundings. Successful schemes of school administration and efficient methods of instruction have been evolved by experimentation and frequently by many readjustments. General uniformity in educational procedure is neither altogether feasible nor altogether desirable. The fact that individual differences, social variations, and financial diversity are so common means that education must take into consideration this lack of uniformity, and that its procedure must be adapted to local requirements.

Many school administrators and teachers are now interested in supervised study. With considerable eagerness many of them determine to introduce the supervision of study in a form little different from that which has been found successful elsewhere. The introduction may succeed, in fact, it usually does, but again it may fail, and fail very seriously. Some failures are quite easily overcome, but when an attempt has been made to reorganize school procedure thoroughly and also unsuccessfully a reactionary spirit is likely to be born. Subsequent reforms become increasingly difficult under such conditions.

Supervised study means a comprehensive and deep-going change in school administration and teaching. Here, for example, is a school in which the usual recitation period is devoted to many questions and answers, to hurried and insufficiently explained assignments, to much home work, and to a formal mass teaching that fails to note individual differences. Supervised study will

change such a school drastically. There will be a minimum amount of reciting, assignments will be carefully explained and studied in class, home work will be greatly reduced if not wholly eliminated, and pupils will be taught in smaller groups and according to their individual progress-rate. Such reorganization involves administratively a longer class-period and a longer school day. If now the class-periods and the school day are lengthened, but the old type of recitation and much home work are retained, disaster is certain to occur. Parents and pupils will despise supervised study, for to them it means heavier burdens and even poorer teaching. With the hope that many school men may find the introduction of supervised study worth while, the following suggestions of procedure growing out of considerable experience with the introduction of this method are offered.

1. The first concern of the principal and the teacher should be to study carefully the meaning and the typical methods of supervised study. Stated briefly, this form of school procedure means teaching and training the pupils to study under the direction of the teacher who has the particular subject in charge.

2. The present school organization should be studied in relation to the proposed change. To what extent is the present form of school practice different from supervised study, and in what particular ways will it be necessary to make revisions? Are the teachers ready for the change? Have they conferred about the proposal, and are they willing to make the change? If the teachers are unwilling, it is absolutely useless to attempt the introduction of supervised study. An unwilling teacher forced to use this method can easily make it appear wholly inferior to the displaced method of teaching.

3. It is wise to experiment first with one or two subjects. Inevitable readjustments must be tried. There is a rather delicate technique to be studied and automatized. Local conditions will require modifications perhaps not needed in other schools. If, however, supervised study is introduced generally in the school, much confusion, discouragement, and dissatisfaction are likely to result, especially in a very large high school.

4. The class-period should be lengthened to at least fifty or fifty-five minutes. In many schools double periods are now becom-

ing common. The eighty- and ninety-minute periods are greatly to be preferred where the number of teachers is sufficiently large. The danger in lengthening the class-period lies in retaining the old question-and-answer type of recitation. Under the new plan the teacher is required to perform three tasks: to test knowledge in a daily review, to assign new work and make its meaning clear, and to supervise the pupils while they study the new assignment. The bulk of the period is devoted to studying and not to reciting. In Latin and modern languages the emphasis is, not on the old translation worked out at home, but on the new translation, its general meaning, its allusions, its ideas and ideals, etc. The daily review would consist merely of a re-reading of this translation, worked out the day before in class, and the stressing of a few essential points in grammar or in general meaning. To lengthen the class-period without revising the method of teaching is likely to bring about complaint and poor results in scholarship.

5. The divided period as outlined under paragraph 4 is least confusing at first. It requires less change in the daily schedule than any other type of supervision. It insures supervision by the teacher of the subject that is being studied at the time. In the usual study-hall, where certain teachers are assigned "to keep order," they may be called upon to offer assistance. Such requests and response are not supervised study. Under the best conditions such supervision might be given by teachers having only a general knowledge of the subject. During the divided, or the double period, the teacher has opportunity to supervise the studying of his own pupils. This is sound psychology and correct teaching.

6. The lengthened class-periods will mean a somewhat longer school day. This implies, of course, that the pupil will have less time to devote to studying at home. It is important, therefore, that where provision is made for considerable studying in school there should be a reduction in home-study requirements.

7. The method of procedure will differ in the several subjects. The procedure in studying history, literature, algebra, and Latin is different and requires treatment specifically applicable to their respective fields. It is therefore important that each teacher should study the psychology of his particular subjects. (*Psychology of High-School Subjects*, by C. H. Judd, and *The Psychology*

of the *Common Branches*, by F. N. Freeman, are valuable in this connection.)

8. Before undertaking the supervision of study in the sense here used the teacher should have clearly in mind the program to be followed during each period. To multiply questions and drill of the usual types obviously spells failure. The teacher must know what questions are all-essential during the daily review. Only the most important can be stressed. The development of the assignment needs very careful preparation. Here the teaching must be so clear and so inspiring that the pupils will understand and want the new work. When the silent study-period begins, it will be necessary for the teacher to go among the pupils, directing those who need further explanations and noting the acumen of each pupil. In this way the pupil's progress can be measured just as well as during the customary recitation period. Teachers frequently ask, "What am I to do during the supervised study-period?" The answer covers the whole field of teaching pupils how to study. A well-organized and comparative study of the literature on this subject will convince the teacher that this is a large order, but not one impossible to fill. Teaching, we are constantly reminded, is far more than pouring in facts. Important as the informational aim is, the view of teaching as direction in learning or studying is larger and nobler.

The best-known books on this subject are the following: Hinsdale, *The Art of Study*; Kramer, *Talks to Students on The Art of Study*; McMurray, *How to Study*; Earhart, *Teaching Children How to Study*; Hall-Quest, *Supervised Study*; Whipple, *How to Study Effectively*; Dearborn, *How to Learn Easily*; Kilson, *How to Use Your Mind*; Wilson, *How to Train Pupils to Study*.

Generally speaking, supervised study should be introduced gradually. A careful survey of the local conditions and how they require treatment is essential. As the development of the method proceeds, needful modifications are likely to be required. There is no general method of supervised study. It differs with the school, the subject, the pupil group, and of course with the teacher. It is this flexibility that makes study supervision so easy to introduce where proper safeguards are provided.